F: NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

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REMARKS TO THE NATIONAL STRATEGY SEMINAR
THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
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I appreciate the opportunity to make the concluding remarks to the National Strategy Seminar for Reserve Officers. From the reports I have had of your meetings, and my intelligence on this is good, I realize that you have broadly covered the various elements of Soviet strategy and tactics, the nature of the Communist threat, the relative military strength of East and West, and the face of war in the nuclear age.

In dealing with analyses of the Soviet threat I find that there is often a tendency to go to extremes. There are experts in this field who tend to magnify all aspects of Soviet power and become prophets of gloom. Others tend to discount Soviet accomplishments and unduly magnify their internal difficulties. This could add up to an unhealthy complacency.

The first class of experts is the larger, though recently we have seen the other extreme in some magazine articles which have attempted to discredit, on what appears to me to be the flimsiest evidence, recognized Soviet accomplishments, particularly in the field of outer space.

Certainly it is more dangerous to underrate than to overrate, though the latter can well be expensive in terms of our budget.

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In these estimates of where we stand in relation to the Soviet, one of the crucial areas where some tend to underrate the Soviets is in the assessments of the relative economic output of the two great power blocs.

True, the gross national product of the United States alone is over twice that of the USSR. If we add to U.S. production that of other countries of the Free World, while adding to Soviet production that of Communist China and the Soviet Satellites, the ratio is still more favorable to us.

But as against this we must recognize that the rate of growth of the Communist Bloc is substantially greater than that of the Free World, and will probably remain so for some time.

Even more important is the extent to which Soviet present production and investment are keyed directly and indirectly to their military power. In fact, Soviet military outlays are now about equal to ours in terms of what they would cost us. Similarly, their annual investment in industry - vital to military power as well as economic growth - is now equal to that of the U.S. To achieve all this from their lower economic base, they have to devote about twice the proportion of their gross national product to military purposes as we do.

Of course, to achieve such goals within their much smaller economy, they are forced to curtail consumers' goods. But by emphasizing guns instead of butter, they have greatly reduced the significance in the terms of the power struggle of the still great gap between their over-all economic strength and ours.

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Naturally, Khrushchev would like to have his people believe that the USSR has already achieved a state of military parity, if not superiority. While it is not the role of intelligence to attempt detailed net estimates of our relative military position vis-a-vis the Bloc, we have good evidence on which to reject any such conclusion.

Furthermore, the theory that either of the great nuclear powers could destroy the other, without the attacker himself being devastated, is not, I believe, subscribed to on either side of the Iron Curtain. The threat of mutual nuclear destruction is a nightmare that cannot be dismissed, but even though International Communism expects to gain the world, it does not wish to acquire a world in ashes.

From Soviet statements as well as from other evidence available to us, it seems clear that the USSR is placing more and more reliance on the development of ballistic missiles as its chief instrument of strategic nuclear attack. But the Soviets are not immune to the many difficulties inherent in developing new and untried hardware into reliable weapons systems.

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Meanwhile Khrushchev and his military aides have done their best to deprecate the manned bomber, both to their own people and abroad. In fact he has called them "museum pieces." This may be, in part, to quiet the fears of their people and to bolster their assertions of superiority in one key military field.

Last May, Khrushchev told a delegation of West German Social Democratic editors that, though the NATO countries really possessed a large air force, it was, he said, technically outdated and it could be shot down by ordinary anti-aircraft artillery, and even by ordinary fighters.

> "Why then," said Khrushchev, "do the Western military leaders base themselves on bomber aviation and talk a lot about it? Because their rocket technology is still weak" . . . "Therefore it appears that talk about a large number of bombers is being indulged in for purposes of deceit."

From Khrushchev's viewpoint this is undoubtedly good propaganda if he can make it stick, since the USSR today is in a position of inferiority vis-a-vis the U.S. with regard to manned bombers. The tremendous effort which we see the Soviets putting into advanced radar, ground-to-air missiles, and other defenses against aircraft would seem to belie the deprecatory statements of Khrushchev about them.

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Obviously both our military defenses and our ability to retaliate by missile and aircraft should together be kept adequate to meet the threat. Here is where the superior industrial capacity of the Free World and of the U.S. in particular can and must play its role.

In the past when a technical, scientific, or industrial problem, such as that we face today in the missile field, has been put up to the ingenuity of our scientists and production experts, we have not long remained in second place. It is certainly incumbent upon us to see to it that we do not fail in this instance.

If we do keep up our military defenses, the most immediate threat to us for the years immediately ahead is not likely to be physical destruction by all-out nuclear war. The danger is rather the slow attrition of the power position of the Free World by a combination of political warfare, and economic penetration and subversion.

Despite occasional missile rattling, as at the time of Suez, during the Middle Eastern crisis last year, and more recently in talks with Mr. Harriman and others, we do not estimate that it is the Kremlin's present intention to advance Communism by deliberately provoking war.

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We cannot entirely discount the risk, however, that the Soviets might miscalculate Western strength or the firmness of our intentions, and adopt positions from which it would be hard for them to find an acceptable line of retreat. The Soviets have miscalculated before, as in the 1948 Berlin blockade and in Korea. We can hope that Khrushchev, after having castigated Stalin for adventurism in the famous speech of February 1956 will not fall prey to the same temptation at Berlin or elsewhere. Aggression by proxy against the newly emerging and less developed countries may be a tempting but it obviously is a dangerous course.

The basic strategy of International Communism, with its primary emphasis on measures short of war, has remained remarkably unchanged over the years. So too have its objectives.

These were never more bluntly stated than in Khrushchev's ebullient speeches in Poland these last days.

Obviously referring to the phrase attributed to him, "We will bury you," he explained that when he said that Communism would be the graveyard of Capitalism, he did not mean that Communists would take shovels and start digging; "History," he said, "would take care of capitalists." They too, he suggested, would become museum pieces, and added that "If there were a God and he could act, he would take a good broom and sweep you out."

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Certainly Khrushchev pictures himself as devoted to the task of helping in this burying and sweeping.

The "we will bury you" theme has been the fanatical tenet and credo of communism, sophisticatedly preached by Lenin, brazenly carried out by Stalin, and more subtly practiced by Khrushchev.

If Soviet policy were restricted to building a better Russia for the Russians, we could not object. To the Kremlin leaders, however, the USSR is merely the base from which Communism is to be expanded to cover the world.

As we are entering a period of greatly increased personal intercourse between the two power blocs, with exhibitions, tourism, cultural exchanges, and the like, it is important not to lose sight of the fundamental nature of this conflict.

This is too often overlooked by the casual visitor to the Soviet Union. To a considerable degree the Kremlin's international objectives are not well understood or necessarily shared even by the Soviet people themselves with whom our tourists and exchange missions come in contact, and with whom as individuals the American people have so much in common.

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We should remember that the Soviet Union is a dictatorship, run by the high command of the Communist Party, that the Party itself numbers only about eight million -- about five percent of the adult population of the Soviet Union and only about 13 percent of the number of actual voters in our own last Presidential election.

Furthermore, these eight million party members have no real freedom even in choosing their local party leaders much less the leaders in the Presidium. It is these latter who determine the policies on which the fate of the Soviet people depend, including the policy of the secretly subsidized export of Communism on a world-wide basis.

This policy is an insidious interference in the internal affairs of free countries. If the Communist program were advanced in the international field by open and peaceful means as a form of competition between two great conflicting views of how society and the lives of people should be organized, we could well accept this challenge. Let us compete, let the peoples choose and decide which system is the better. Khrushchev claims he is inviting us to such a competition.

But this is a mirage.

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Where behind the Iron Curtain have the peoples themselves had a free opportunity to choose? Certainly not in Czechoslovakia in 1948, or in Hungary in 1956, or in East Germany today. And where in the Free World would Khrushchev give this choice, if our liberties had once been taken away. And if Khrushchev wants an open competition why does he shield the Soviet people from a full exchange of ideas, of information, and of persons? Why the almost pathological concern to hide things from us and from his own people also.

The answer is that Communism, despite its brazen ideological pronouncements, cannot tolerate free competition. Nowhere has a nation fallen under Communist domination and then been allowed to test its choice by resort to free elections.

Instead, peoples are faced with the fait accompli of being taken over before they realize what has happened. In Hungary this was helped on in the immediate postwar days by what I understand has been vividly described to you as the Rakosi "salami" technique -- biting off, bit by bit, elements of freedom until the whole structure was eroded.

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In Czechoslovakia the popular front technique succeeded in putting a minority party into power. This illustrates the grave danger of a situation in any state where the Communist party and its allies succeed in gaining even a substantial minority position. Once in power, the voting ends and popular say has no peaceful way of recovering control. In the case of Czechoslovakia the danger point was reached when the Communists gained less than 40 percent of the electorate, with the non-Communist parties, as is so often the case, hopelessly divided.

Today the Communists, with their progress blocked in Western Europe and to a great extent in the Far East, are concentrating a major effort in the newly emergent states of Asia and of Africa. Here they exploit political weaknesses as well as dynamic nationalism and the surge of rising expectations which are not easy to satisfy.

Their weapons include economic penetration, the development of hard-core Communist parties -- underground or above-ground -- propaganda both open and black, and in the areas around the periphery of the Communist bloc itself, they maintain the overhanging threat of their military power.

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Yet there is no reason to adopt an attitude of pessimism as we face this particular challenge of International Communism.

We are far better prepared than is generally believed, to deal with the Communist political and subversive threat.

In the last ten years, after going through far too long a period of naive complacency, this country has been awakened to the danger. We have also learned to understand Communist operating techniques. We know about the orders given in Moscow to leaders of other communist parties. This is not too difficult. The security of these parties as they operate in the Free World varies from medium to poor. We have ways of covering their activities and we get the basic information we need to gauge their strength and tactics. Like too many of the rest of us, they talk too freely for their own good.

Furthermore, the efficiency of the Communist organization in the less developed areas of the world is itself not well developed. In the post-war days they had in many European countries, as in France and Italy, for example, sophisticated old-line Communists of the Thorez-Togliatti school. Through death and old age this type of leadership is wearing out in Europe, and it will be a long while, if ever, before such leadership could be developed for Asia, Africa, or Latin America.

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In area after area Moscow and Peiping, and their covert spokesmen in their far-flung apparatus, have overreached themselves. Their true hand has been shown in Hungary, Tibet, Egypt, and in many other countries that could be mentioned. It may be that in their over-eagerness to promote a Communist-dominated Iraq, the Communists have overplayed their hand with the new Iraqi leaders and damaged their position in the Arab world.

Here is an interesting sidelight on Tibet. The agreement of May 23, 1951, between the Peiping government and the local government of Tibet provided that the Chinese Communist army units entering Tibet should not "arbitrarily take a single needle or thread from the people." Eight years later they took the lives of many Tibetans, the liberty of all.

The Communists are fond of saying that the forces of history are on their side. One of the great forces at work today is that of nationalism, particularly in the newly emerging countries of the world. However, not the Communists, with their goal of domination, but the West, with its ingrained respect for self-determination, is coming more and more to be recognized as the ally of the new Afro-Asian nationalism. As anti-colonial feeling subsides in the new states, it is being replaced by growing realization that Sino-Soviet expansionism is a far greater threat to their cherished independence.

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Soviet economic aid is beginning to run into the same type of problems we face in our own aid programs, including too many Soviet experts and technicians and here and there shoddy goods. Also the political petticoats of the programs have shown up badly in several instances, notably in Yugoslavia where aid was promptly terminated and half-built projects left to the weather, when Yugoslav policy no longer pleased the Soviet.

Here as in certain other instances the so-called "aid without strings" has been shown up as "strings without aid."

It is significant that little or no publicity is allowed to reach the Russian people themselves about the Kremlin's loans and aid to foreign countries. This leads one to believe that this use of their assets would not go down well with people who are themselves denied so many of the good things of life.

When things don't go as the Soviets want, they tend to lose their temper in public, as most recently in the cancellation of Khrushchev's Scandinavian trip and in the Chinese Communists' retort to India over Tibet.

Many of the states in Europe, Asia, Africa, and even in parts of this Hemisphere, which have tended towards neutralism, have markedly changed in their attitude about communism over the last few years. Their former complacent approach to the danger is being replaced by a far greater degree of sophistication. Here some of the initial appeal of communism is wearing off. The uninitiated are becoming initiated.

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Finally, there are signs of change within the Soviet Union itself which over the years might bring about some relaxation of the aggressive expansionist policy of the International Communist movement.

The rigid police state of the days of Stalin has been relaxed. Education is being pressed and while special emphasis is being placed on education in scientific, technical, and engineering fields, which would add to their industrial and military strength, there is nevertheless, a general broadening of the educational base in the Soviet Union.

While the Soviet government is still a closely regulated autocracy, it is not today quite as free as under Stalin to disregard wholly the desires of the people among which the yearning for peace is foremost. As long as the Soviet people are only permitted to hear, to read and to learn what the Soviet government dictates, progress will be slow. But as long as there is some progress there is hope of gradual evolution. Increasing contact between the American and Russian peoples should contribute to this end.

I would not leave the impression, in concluding, that this listing of favorable trends should in any sense cause us to relax our sense of urgency in taking measures to counter Soviet political, economic and subversive penetration in the Free World.

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Quite the contrary, the moment a tide shows signs of slacking, then is the opportunity to drop holding operations and press the advantage. Since I appreciate there are many "Doubting Thomas'" on this score, I can assure you that we are better prepared and better coordinated to deal with this challenge, and are dealing with it more effectively, than many of you realize.

But too much talking about plans and practices would only alert the challenger to our counter measures. Hence silence in face of criticism is better than any bragging about past accomplishment, or programs for the future.

One of the key purposes of this reserve officer seminar has been to alert a highly selected group to the nature and implications of the challenge which we face from International Communism. I would like to give my fullest endorsement both to the objective of the seminar and to the manner in which it has been carried out. But the job does not end here tonight. Each of you in turn can help to give the thinking citizens of your communities the benefit of your own impressions. In a free society like ours an informed public opinion is indispensable to give the backing to those men and to those measures that are needed to meet Khrushchev's challenge to us.

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